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Discoveries

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PEREGRINATIONS

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Discoveries

'Magnificent' baptismal font discovered at Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity, Palestinian officials say



An ancient 1,500-year-old, 6th - century baptismal font has been discovered on June 22, 2019, during renovation work at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. In a news conference earlier this week, Ziad al-Bandak, head of the committee tasked with restoring the famous church, announced that archaeologists had discovered a baptismal font (a basin of water used for baptisms) dating to the 6th or 7th century hidden inside another, older baptismal font. The newly discovered font appears to be

made of the same sort of stone as the church's columns, meaning it could be nearly as old as the church itself, which dates to the 4th century.

Re-written from <https://www.livescience.com/65826-jesus-birthplace-baptismal-fonts-found.html> and [https://www.foxnews.com/science/baptismal-font-discovered-](https://www.foxnews.com/science/baptismal-font-discovered-bethlehem-church-of-the-nativity)

[bethlehem-church-of-the-nativity](https://www.foxnews.com/science/baptismal-font-discovered-bethlehem-church-of-the-nativity)



Rare sword uncovered in pre-Viking grave in Uppsala

Archaeologists have uncovered an ornate sword and other striking finds dating back to before the Viking Age in a burial site close to Uppsala. An ornate sword was one of the most impressive parts of the discovery, which was decorated with gold, silver-gilt, animal decorations and garnets. The grave dates back to some point between the years 550-600, during the Vendel Period in Sweden, before the start of the Viking Age. It is believed to belong to a person of high status who was closely connected with the royal family around 1,500 years ago. A man and a child were apparently buried together, and the archaeologists found the remains of a bird of prey, horses, dogs, sheep, two bear traps, and other animals in the grave, all of which are indicators of the



man's high status. The finds are fragmentary, since the grave was a so-called fire grave, which were common during the period and meant that bodies, and often the objects to be buried with them, were burned before burial.

"This was some kind of symbol of value and power during this time. The man who was buried with this sword must have been in the royals' inner circle," commented Hed Jakobsson. Archaeologists also discovered around 50 ivory game pieces, which were extremely unusual. The grave contained a glass cup and a gold pendant decorated with herringbone, of which only one similar item has been found before, which was located in a chieftain's grave outside Sundsvall.

Re-written from <https://www.thelocal.se/20190826/rare-burial-site-uncovered-in-uppsala>

Woman discovers 13th-century Cimabue in her kitchen



A 13th-century masterpiece by the proto-Renaissance Florentine painter Cimabue, known as Cenni di Pepo, has been discovered in a kitchen in Compiègne, a town north of Paris, where it might have been binned during a house clearance if an auctioneer had not spotted it. Christ Mocked, by the 13th-century artist who taught Giotto, is estimated to be worth €4m-€6m (£3.5m-£5.3m).

The work had for years gone unnoticed in the house of a woman in her 90s. It had been hanging between her open-plan kitchen and her living room, arousing little interest from the family, who assumed it was a standard religious icon. Although it was placed directly above a hotplate for cooking food, the picture was in good condition. In June this year, when the woman decided to sell her house and move away, an expert was contacted to look at the contents, furniture and furnishings of the 1960s-built house in case some of it could be sold.

"I had a week to give an expert view on the house contents and empty it," Philomène Wolf told *Le Parisien*. "I had to make room in my schedule ... if I didn't, then everything was due to go to the dump." Wolf said she spotted the painting as soon as she entered the house. "You rarely see something of such quality. I immediately thought it was a work of Italian primitivism. But I didn't imagine it was a Cimabue." Paris art experts were then contacted to give their view on the painting's origin and it was valued at millions. About 100 other objects from the house were sold for around €6,000 and the remaining furniture and decorations were disposed of at the local dump. The woman and her family, who wish to remain anonymous, told the auction house that they had thought it was simply an old religious icon from Russia. The woman said she no idea where it had come from or how it had come into the family's hands.

Only 11 works painted on wood have been attributed to Cimabue, none of them signed. It is thought to be part of a large diptych dating from 1280, when Cimabue painted eight scenes depicting Christ's passion and crucifixion, here the Mocking of Christ. Two scenes from the same diptych, known as *The Virgin and Child with Two Angels* and *The Flagellation of Christ*, already hang in the National Gallery in London and the Frick Collection in New York respectively.

The National Gallery described Cimabue's work as representing "a crucial moment in the history of art" when Italian painters, while still influenced by Byzantine painting, were exploring the naturalistic depiction of forms and three-dimensional space. The French art expert Eric Turquin, who studied and valued the painting, said tests using infrared light found that there was "no disputing that the painting was done by the same hand" as other known works by Cimabue.

Re-written from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/sep/24/woman-discovers-renaissance-masterpiece-in-her-kitchen?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook&fbclid=IwAR0MHD1hLrGT9IXFhgJLs44PpeRjFNK-BrhW2Z2XX2j4rzRDgFfwAlxoy7k

Metal-Detectorist Finds Medieval Gold Ring in his Garage, 40 Years after Discarding

Tom Clark, 81, dug up the buried treasure while scanning an area of farmland near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, in 1979, then put it inside a metal tin and forgot about it, after told it was worthless modern ring. Then the retired leather craftsman came across the rare seal ring eight years ago while sorting through items from his mother's house after she passed away. Now a now a much more experienced collector, said he instantly knew it was a seal ring dating back to the 14th century and would have belonged to someone important given its decoration and quality. The gold ring, dating to around 1350, features a carved deal of a walking man surrounded by a Latin inscription that translates to "I hide the true message." Mr. Clark adds: "It's rare and elegant. I'd love to know who it belonged to."

Re-written from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/08/23/metal-detectorist-finds-10000-gold-ring-garage-40-years-discarding/>



Notre Dame Fire Revives Demand for Skilled Stone Carvers in France



Students chip and chisel away at heavy slabs of stone in the workshops of the Hector Guimard high school, less than three miles from Paris' Notre Dame cathedral.

The fire at Paris' Notre Dame has spurred new demand for experts who have the same skills required to rebuild Notre Dame as it was 900 years ago. In the workshops of the Hector Guimard high school, less than three miles from the cathedral, young stone carvers are training for that task. In an airy and light-filled workshop in the north of Paris, a handful of students chip and chisel away at heavy slabs of stone. Each works on his or her own piece, but all are sculpting the same project: the base of a Corinthian column. The students are earning a professional degree to hew the stone pieces needed to maintain and restore France's historical monuments. Every year, about 30 new stonemasons graduate either with this degree, the professional license in stone carving for historic monuments, or a less advanced diploma in stone carving. The program began in 1945, as a way to help restore France's historic monuments damaged in World War II.

François Menut is one of the students working toward the professional license. "I've always been passionate about drawing and art history, but I also wanted a job that was physical," says Menut. "With stone carving, we give life to an edifice and

perpetuate history. We're also creating a link with the past and transmitting values that are important to conserve in society. With stone carving, we give life to an edifice and perpetuate history. We're also creating a link with the past and transmitting values that are important to conserve in society," he says.



François Menut works on the base of a Corinthian column.

In medieval times, stone carving and masonry were masculine professions, but today there are women studying the trade. "In the beginning, it was my own parents who were surprised when I left my architecture studies to do this," says Marjorie Lebegue. "But most everyone who finds out I'm studying to be a stone carver says, 'Wow, what a beautiful profession.'"

To earn their degree, students must also take classes in math, French, computer design, geography and art history. "Art history is extremely important," says Eliette Coutherut, the head of the Saint Lambert center. "You can't work the stone without knowing its history and the different currents that influenced architecture." By the time the students earn their degrees, Coutherut says, they've had four years of training in stone carving, due to requirements to enter the degree program. On graduating, they are fully qualified to work, either alone or as part of a masonry stone carving team on France's most treasured historic monuments.

Marjorie Lebegue is one of the students working towards a professional degree in stone carving. "In the beginning, it was my own parents who were surprised when I left my architecture studies to do this," says Lebegue. "But most everyone who finds out I'm studying to be a stone carver says, 'Wow, what a beautiful profession.'" "The computer helps gain in time and accuracy," says Lebegue. "But for stone carving, you have to have a 3D vision and be able to represent objects in space. And drawing by hand is still the best way to acquire that skill." "Our work involves very specific requirements and we are short of skilled labor in a dozen or so traditional professions," says Frederic Létoffé, the president of the monument restorers' professional association. "But the Notre Dame fire woke the country up." 🐼



At Saint Lambert, the students mix age-old stone carving techniques with cutting-edge technology. Lebegue works on a 3D stone carving diagram on her computer, while others draw on drafting sheets, using a compass and ruler

Re-written after <https://www.npr.org/2019/07/20/743010875/notre-dame-fire-revives-demand-for-skilled-stone-carvers-in-france>